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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

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(8)

17 July 1950

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Korean Situation

I. Military Situation.

Northern Korean infantry has crossed the Kum River in force and despite heavy losses has approached the outskirts of Taejon from the West. Additionally, a heavy infiltration of enemy troops on the US right flank along the Taejon front threatens to drive a salient between US troops and the Southern First Corps in the Mumui area. Further to the east, Southern troops repulsed an enemy attack north of Hamchang but were driven from Yongju, at the head of the corridor which leads through Andong to Taegu.

Five to seven enemy fighters were sighted by US bombers in the air over Seoul yesterday but the enemy made no attempts to attack. US low-level air attacks destroyed 13 and damaged 15 enemy tanks in the past 24 hours and three bridges were also reported destroyed.

A US naval air patrol reports that the 50-ship fishing fleet first sighted on 12 July is still at sea and is now some 70 miles south of its first observed position. This would place the Northern fishing fleet near the 38th Parallel.

II. Other Developments.

President Rhee has assigned to General MacArthur, in his capacity as Commander of UN forces, command authority over all South Korean land, sea and air forces for the duration of hostilities, with the privilege of delegating such authority, or exercising it personally. Meanwhile, Rhee has removed Home Minister Paek, who has proved himself incompetent and appointed Dr. Chough Pyungok, former Chief of National Police under the US Occupation who has a reputation for being both tough and politically ambitious.

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US Ambassador Muccio reports that some 50,000 well-organized and well-led police are available in South Korea not only to assist US troops by spotting infiltrating Northerners in combat areas but also to fight as small combat units. The police are already engaged in spotting work behind the front. Muccio has discussed the employment of South Korean police with senior US Army personnel in the field and it has been agreed that police units should be armed with grenades and machine guns both to offset any guerrilla superiority in weapons, and to bolster police self-confidence.

R. H. FILLENKOTTER
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